

September Meeting

K. Scott Swan, Ph.D., Peebles Prof. of Business, Chair

Thank you for the honor of serving as the faculty representative to the Board of Visitors. After completing my Ph.D. at the University of Texas at Austin, I began as a visiting professor teaching international business and marketing at W&M over 28 years ago...and obviously never left. I have had my best possible career here. I appreciate the ability to assist the faculty, administration, and Board of Visitors to fulfill our current mission as well as drive innovation.

The major accomplishments Faculty Assembly (FA) achieved last year were driven by the feedback received from several surveys that set priorities, the BOV mandates, and critical challenges highlighted by Pres. Rowe. **Three broad areas are highlighted for their importance to the faculty.**

First, having input into the strategic planning process was our number one priority. The one area that we felt we did not offer much value was in resource allocation – our COPAR committee found no traction this last year. Importantly, FA felt that we had a seat at the table for innovation initiatives, “Productivity of the Faculty” KPI report, planning for R1 status, crafting a rankings response that emphasized our values, supporting campus freedom of speech policy with the expansion of the “Better Arguments” training, passing the new UG marine science major, and crafting a trusted process for the faculty handbook revisions mandate. Overall, we appreciate Pres. Rowe’s and Provost Agouris’ work with us as partners.

Second, the new school approval was an especially difficult process. Faculty Assembly had divisions within. There was difficulty in understanding the strategy with its uncertain second and third order effects on the university and the faculty. Radical change is very difficult and a period of fifty years without a new school requires strategic clarity and convincing communication that must be crafted from listening and responding to the W&M community’s legitimate concerns. Ultimately, this was strongly supported with no one voting against the measure. A major accomplishment and impressively reinforced by the announcement of the Jefferson Lab’s data center funding by the US government.

Third, we desired to position the faculty perspective as increasingly relevant for future decisions. We have been a good partner with the administration and the BOV. FA supported the administration’s policy related to free speech. We offered guidance on the importance of the role of the NTE, argued for tuition remission’s role in the attraction and retention of employees, and assisted in the pre-planning for a full summer school offering.

What are the faculty priorities and concerns this year? We administered a new faculty survey and I will share the findings in our November meeting. We continue to desire to be a good partner. We will complete the faculty handbook update. We desire to continue to have relevance in strategic planning and change – including Phase 2 of the Faculty Productivity study and future W&M KPIs for our values related to the rankings response. Summer school and dependent tuition assistance at W&M are important goals. Further, for challenges this year, faculty offer important skills and insights to assist: the faculty are likely to have been here longer, have a greater depth of understanding of our students’ needs, are the dominant means to implementing any decisions, and live the mission of this university everyday with our teaching, research, and service. We have tenure for the special purpose of trying to offer “truth” – or at least multiple perspectives - to students and others with some shelter from powerful winds. We are an important tie to our alumni. We see ourselves as an equal branch, a partner, to the administration and the BOV in the quest to drive W&M to further greatness.

Thank you for your important leadership on the issues that touch W&M.